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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000941

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: ABYEI, SUDAN ON KNIFE'S EDGE, WARNS FOREIGN
MINISTER

REF: A. KHARTOUM 936
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 933
[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 913

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: FM Deng Alor described ongoing tensions on the June 8 Abyei road map while noting some progress in implementing its milestones. Back from a just concluded visit to several European capitals, he summarized increasing European pressure, especially from France, on the need for Sudanese compliance on the ICC and detailed NCP infighting on how to deal with this growing challenge. Sudan asked for French intervention to improve relations with Chad while Alor encourage Darfur rebels to unite in order to confront Khartoum more effectively. End summary.

ABYEI BETWEEN PROGRESS AND IMPLOSION

[1](#)2. (C) CDA Fernandez met Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor on June 24. As often happens when there are sensitive issues to discuss, they met at a local coffee shop as the Minister suspects that Sudanese Intelligence bugs his own office at the MFA. Alor began by reviewing the latest events from the contested region of Abyei, where the June 8 Abyei Road Map (signed by Alor for the SPLM) is fitfully being implemented. He described Abyei as being on a knife's edge, it could explode at any moment or there could be more progress announced within a few days. Alor said that there had been "a minor problem" with the formation of the police. While the local (Ngok Dinka) police colonel was busy recruiting local people for the 700 man force, Khartoum shipped in 75 unwelcome and unasked-for policemen from Kadugli. At first, the NCP's point man for Abyei, State Minister (and ICC indictee) Ahmed Haroun denied that any police had been sent. Then he finally admitted that the NCP had indeed sent in the interlopers asking that "you can surely make some good use of them." GOSS President Kiir asked that these police be withdrawn and Haroun had reportedly agreed to do so.

[1](#)3. (C) More serious than the police issue was continuing controversy about the future of the infamous SAF 31st Brigade, still hunkered down inside Abyei town and occupying a local girls' school as their barracks. At the June 23 JDB (Joint Defense Board) meeting, SAF had said that the unit would not be withdrawn from Abyei "until the investigation is completed," an open ended deadline that could have the force there for months if not years. Alor said that the SAF unit should be gone by the time the police force is in place, per te Road Map. He described a phone call from an angry SPLA Chief of Staff (General Oyai Deng Ajak) saying "we are fed up with these NCP/SAF tactics, if they won't remove them, we are

ready to do so by force - immediately." The JDB will go to Abyei on June 25 to try to defuse the matter. SAF had relieved the colonel in charge of the Brigade during the May fighting and he had been sent to extended training in Egypt.

14. (C) While tensions are still palpable, the National Congress Party was pushing for quick progress on achieving some of the other Road Map benchmarks this week, no later than June 28 to coincide with President Al-Bashir's attendance at the 11th AU Summit in Egypt. This was all the more remarkable since there was still no agreement on the leadership for the Abyei interim administration. The NCP still pressed for a Misseriya Arab as the Deputy while the SPLM pointed out that since Arab populated Meiram had been excluded "no Baggara (Arab cowherders) are residents of the region within the current interim borders." While current SPLM Abyei leader Edward Lino was still in the running, Alor said that the interim administrator chosen by the SPLM would almost certainly be SSDDR Chair, General Arop Mayak, a Kiir favorite. Alor also said that the SPLM had obtained a list of 12 NCP perpetrators of ethnic violence in Abyei, individuals who had stoked ethnic fires and committed crimes, "they were behind the violence in Abyei, Kharasana and Aweil." Not surprisingly, the names included Haroun, NCP negotiator Dirdeiry Ahmed Mohammed, and former Kordofan state officials Issa Al-Bashari and Ahmed Salih Salua. Alor said that he would provide Charge with a handwritten copy of the list.

WHO DOES AL-BASHIR THINK HE IS?

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15. (C) Alor switched gears and then talked about Darfur and his recently concluded European trip with Presidential Advisor Mustafa Othman Ismail. He had good meetings with the Norwegians and Dutch about ways that they could be helpful to Sudan. He spent considerable time with officials in both countries talking about creative ways to try to make South Sudan an attractive place for economic growth and investment. He recalled John Garang's dream of making the South "like Singapore, only with more resources." This is an issue GOSS President Kiir asked Alor to push with the Europeans in order to begin to provide some sort of alternative to the South's rentier economy of today.

16. (C) In Paris (and also in Norway), the Europeans raised the International Criminal Court (ICC) with the Sudanese. French FM Kouchner was particularly aggressive telling Ismail and Alor that "Sudan must cooperate with the ICC. We are serious about this, you are challenging the world and we will not let you get away from this." Kouchner reportedly went on to add that "who does Al-Bashir think he is, President Bush? There is only one superpower. We have to accept that America ignores the ICC, but we won't accept it from you." Alor told Kouchner that the SPLM agrees that Sudan must cooperate with the ICC, while Ismail laid out the NCP party line of zero cooperation or acknowledgment of the court.

17. (C) The French also discussed Abyei and offered to be helpful in rebuilding there. On Chad, the Sudanese asked for French mediation with Chadian President Deby (reftel A) asking that France help to guarantee Chadian good behavior, which prompted Kouchner to answer "but who will guarantee Sudanese good behavior?" There was agreement that without an effective and pro-active border monitoring mechanism the Dakar Agreement between Sudan and Chad brokered by Senegal would be a dead letter. Kouchner called for Sudan to negotiate with all Sudanese rebel groups, including JEM, while Ismail countered that they would only negotiate with Abdul Wahid Nur.

AN NCP HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF?

18. (C) Alor later spoke for two hours with Abdul Wahid Nur on the phone and met with a JEM delegation from London led by Ahmed Togoud. Both meetings were arranged with the help of the French (JEM believes that their Paris office has been penetrated by Sudanese Intelligence). Alor counseled rebel unity and encouraged them all to mend fences- for the nationalist Abdul Wahid to work with the Islamist Khalil Ibrahim and for both to make up with Mini Minnawi. Alor related the bitter history of Southern disunity abetted by Khartoum's intriguing and added that only by rebel unity will they be able to truly exact concessions from the NCP. The SPLM will send a Darfur team headed by Abdul Aziz Helou to Europe in mid July to meet with Nur and other rebel leaders.

19. (C) After all these other meetings, Alor described his individual meeting with Presidential Advisor Ismail. Ismail admitted that he personally agreed that Sudan should cooperate with the ICC and should negotiate with all the rebels, "it is only a matter of time before we sit down with JEM," he added. Ismail said that the "ICC danger is so close now" and encouraged Alor to speak to Al-Bashir and VP Ali Osman Taha about cooperating with the international body. Alor told CDA Fernandez of Ismail's description of a recent NCP strategy session on the ICC - "the one and only meeting held on this" - where Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ali Karti, a notorious hardliner, had called for cooperation. Al-Bashir seemed to waiver but VP Taha vociferously denounced the very idea of softening Sudan's stance on the ICC. The same tale is on the popular Paris-based website www.sudantribune.com on June 25 sourced to a "senior Sudanese official" which can only be Alor or Ismail (probably the former). Taha's upset would be due to the fact that he had the Darfur portfolio during the fateful years of 2003-2005. Alor expects the possible ICC indictment of high level officials in Sudan "will expose these officials before the Sudanese people." He added that it will also expose the fissures within the regime and divide them as they bicker on how to respond.

10. (C) Comment: FM Alor's comments are a precis on Sudan's political reality with disaster and conciliation always just around the corner. Abyei could blow up at any time or could see additional progress within days. Hardline Sudanese debate

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cooperating with the ICC. The SPLM encourages the Darfur rebels to unite against a Government of which the SPLM is a part. We do agree with Alor's description of Abyei as an accord fraught with pitfalls, with painful progress competing with excruciating rehashing of already agreed upon commitments while the possibility of political and military escalation remains. The ICC actions in July could also qualitatively change the political dynamic inside Sudan's ruling elite and its rocky relationship with the West or Sudan could somehow muddle through with its usual mix of deceit, cooperation and defiance. One constant remains and that is that the SPLM will constantly be maneuvering to use breaking political events affecting Sudan to its benefit in its unequal struggle/relationship with the NCP. End comment.

FERNANDEZ